

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

131

Turkey carpet, worthy of noblemen's houses in Europe. The loom and the instruments of which it consists are confined to a few reeds and sticks. The American women seem to have a natural talent for making various useful articles. They can mould pots and jugs of various forms of clay, not with the assistance of a turning machine, like potters, but with their hands alone. These clay vessels they bake, not in an oven, but out of doors, placing sticks round them. They cannot glaze them with lead, but they first dye them of a red colour, and then rub them with a kind of glue to make them shine. There is never any snow, and very little frost, in the region inhabited by the Abipones: but when the South wind blows hard, the air becomes very piercing, and sometimes intolerably so to persons thinly clad. The Abipones shield themselves from the cold with a cloak made of otters' skins. This garment, which is likewise square, is laboriously and elegantly made by the women: whose business it is to strip off the skins of the otters, after they have been caught by dogs, and then fix them to the ground with very slender pegs, that they may not wrinkle. After being dried, they are painted red, in square lines like a dice box. The Indian women cannot dress hides like cur-

286

462

323

462

291

[132]

[237]

294

462

[224]

[531]

[281]

281 riers, but after having well rubbed and softened
 294 them with their hands, they sew them with a
 462 very thin thread, with so much skill, that the
 seams escape the quickest eye, and the whole
 [412] cloak looks like one skin. For needles they
 [283] use very small thorns, with which they pierce
 the otters' skins, as shoemakers do leather with
 an awl, so that the slender thread of the ca-
 raquata can be passed through it. This cloak
 291 is commonly used both by men and women,
 when the air is cold; but the old people of both
 sexes will not part with a hair of these otters'
 skins, even in the hottest weather. Some of
 the poorer sort appear clothed in the skins of
 stags, does, and tigers. All the Americans, who
 are not entirely devoid of modesty, cover them-
 selves with skins to keep out the cold. Others
 substitute, or wear in addition, the many co-
 loured feathers of birds, sewed together with
 singular art; but this is more for the sake of
 adorning than of covering the body. The sa-
 vages who inhabit the mountains, generally
 make threads of the caraquata, or of the bark
 of the tree pinô, with which they weave a kind
 of cloth to serve in part for a covering. The
 765 Abiponian widows, whilst they mourn for their
 302 husbands, cover their shorn heads and their
 shoulders with this same kind of cloth. When